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ABSTRACT

For Black History Month (February 2000), three U.S. Postal Service lessons help students explore the nation's differences and similarities. Students are encouraged to think about the lessons of the past and to form solutions for the future. Lesson 1, "American Diversity," looks at the overall meaning of diversity, examines ways to stop prejudice in school, and teaches tolerance and listening skills through teamwork. Lesson 2, "Messages of Freedom," explores African American history by introducing students to a diverse group of accomplished individuals who have been commemorated by the United States Postal Service on stamps. Lesson 3, "Cover Stories," highlights the Patricia Roberts Harris stamp, the most recent addition to the United States Postal Service's Black Heritage series, and teaches students a great way to collect commemorative stamps. (LB)

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STAMPERS.

Lesson One

AMERICAN DIVERSITY

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As students learn to work cooperatively in teams, they think and write about ways in which children can accept diversity and prevent prejudice.

ED 436 476

Goal: To appreciate racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

Class Time: One or two class periods.

Prep Time: None.

Curriculum Connection: Language Arts; U.S. History; Civics; Life Skills

Discussion

Tell your students that you are going to do some activities to celebrate Black History Month. Ask them to begin by defining diversity.

1. Ask: In what ways are we "diverse" or "different" as people? Your students might explore differences in gender, race, family's country of origin, likes and dislikes, clothes, foods they eat, hairstyles, talents, interests, and so on.

2. Ask: In what ways are the members of our classroom the same? Your students might explore the facts that they are all students, they all live in the same area, they are of similar ages, and so on.

3. Ask: In a group of children, who is more likely to get picked on, excluded, or made fun of: someone who is the same or someone who is different? Discuss some differences that might result in someone's getting teased or excluded. These might be size, way of talking, what they wear, ability in sports or school, being new in town, and so on.

4. Ask: Why do kids who are different get picked on? Are they in the "minority"? How do the people who do the teasing feel? What do they get out of teasing? Why do they do it? Is peer pressure ever involved? How does the person who gets made fun of feel?

5. Ask: What happens when adults who are similar get together and exclude or pick on other adults who are different? Many groups in America, such as African Americans, Native Americans, and Jewish Americans, have often been treated this way. What is the result of such prejudice? (You might discuss some of the difficulties African Americans have encountered.) Why does prejudice harm everyone? How can treating everyone with equal respect change a school (or a country) for the better?

ACTIVITY

Divide your class into small groups of three or five students. Try to separate friends. Instruct your students that working together is one way to learn to find similarities and to learn from differences. Distribute the "William Gets Bullied" worksheet to all students, and assign each group the following activity:

◇ Read the imaginary story about William. Then, as a team, find your own solutions to the problem. Working well as a team is as important as finding the best solutions to the questions.

Before your students get started, make sure they understand how to brainstorm. "Brainstorming" means giving solutions to a problem as they come to mind, with no internal censorship. When they are finished, ask teams to present their work to the class. To conclude, discuss the process of working as a team. Was it easy or hard? Did one person take over? Did everyone contribute? Ask each student to write his or her team's solution to question #3 in the form of a letter to your school's principal.

The Celebrate Diversity program fulfills the following National Education Standards (http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks): U.S. History: 5, 29, 31 (Slavery and liberties, contemporary U.S.) | Language Arts: 1, 4, 7, 8 (Writing, research, reading, speaking, listening) | Civics: 11 (Diversity) | Life Skills: 1, 2, 3, 5 (Group work, conflict resolution, interpersonal communication, leadership)

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Lesson One

WORKSHEET

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William Gets Bullied

One day in October, a new kid shows up in your classroom. William is a smart boy, a loyal friend, generous, a great baseball player, and a lot of fun. But when he arrives at school, nobody knows that. What everybody notices is that William speaks English with a heavy accent. Sometimes it is difficult to understand him. After a morning of classes, William goes to the cafeteria for lunch. There, two boys who were laughing at William's accent in class get behind him and start calling him names. William is really embarrassed and looks angry. He ignores the boys and takes his tray to a table. You and your team watch as the two bullies follow William to his table, ready to give him more trouble. You and your team decide to do something about this situation.

Assignment:

With your team, figure out the following:

1. How should you stop the two boys from bothering William?
2. What should you do to make William feel better?
3. How might you change your school to help new kids?

Teamwork Rules:

- Respect each team member.
- Take turns speaking. Don't interrupt.
- Everyone must participate. Don't let one person take over.
- Share your interests with the group. Try to assign work according to each team member's strengths and interests.
- Every idea is valuable. No idea is ever stupid.
- Try to agree on things, but if you can't agree, vote.

Follow these steps:

1. One team member should volunteer to take notes. A good note-taker must pay attention and write down key words quickly but neatly. Another (different) team member must volunteer to be your team's spokesperson. A good spokesperson should speak loudly and clearly. To choose, rely on your team members' strengths. Who likes to write? Who likes to speak in front of others? If more than two people want these jobs, then divide the work in a reasonable way. If no one wants the jobs, the team must assign the jobs by voting. Vote for the person you believe will do the best work.
2. Read the assignment over to yourself.
3. Together, brainstorm possible solutions to question #1 and #2 (but not #3). Make sure that your note-taker writes down all of your ideas.
4. Once you have several ideas for #1 and #2, stop brainstorming. Review your ideas. Which are the best?
5. Once your team agrees on the best ideas, your spokesperson should take notes on your team's solutions to #1 and #2. The spokesperson will use her or his notes to tell the class about the team's ideas.
6. Now brainstorm again on question #3.
7. Review your ideas and choose the best.
8. The spokesperson should take notes as your team reviews its ideas so he or she can present them clearly to the class.

Once you are finished, all teams will come back together and present their ideas to the class. After the speaker is finished speaking, the speaker should invite his or her teammates to add to the presentation, if they wish.

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Lesson Two

MESSAGES OF FREEDOM

Goal:
To learn African-American history while building teamwork skills

Class Time:
Eight class periods

Prep Time:
None

Curriculum Connection:
Language Arts; U.S. History/Civics; Life Skills

African-American history is not merely the history of slavery, emancipation, and the fight for equal rights. African Americans have been entrepreneurs, cowboys, soldiers, poets, musicians, educators, pioneers, and scientists as well as civil rights leaders. The United States Postal Service's Celebrate Diversity poster shows just a few of these remarkable Americans. In your study of African-American history, you may want to include some other important figures who are not mentioned here.

To begin, ask your students to read and review the Celebrate Diversity poster. You might discuss the artwork featured on the front of the poster as well as the commemorative stamp images.

Step One: Choose (one class period)

1. Review each portrait on the poster; each is a commemorative stamp image.
2. Have students divide up into the same teams they worked in for Lesson One.
3. Tell your students that they are going to research one of the people shown on the poster, the time period that person lived in, and the area of his or her work. Then they will give two- to five-minute presentations to the class.
4. Distribute worksheets to teams. Ask each team to choose one historical figure shown on the poster. Each team must choose a different person.

Step Two: Research and Write

5. (Two class periods) Give your students class time and home time to research and write about their chosen historical figure. If a team can find little information about their historical figure, instruct them to research the time period in which that person lived. What was life like in that time and place? What opportunities and obstacles existed for African Americans?
6. (One class period) While teams work on their presentations, review each team's research results and presentation ideas. Encourage your students to be creative with their presentations. (See student worksheet.)
7. (One class period) Give teams a class period in which to "polish" their presentations.
8. (One class period) Give teams an opportunity to practice their presentations. Teams may practice simultaneously.

Step Three: Present (one class period)

9. Have each team give its presentation to the class. Parents or other students might be invited as well.

To conclude, students should send a letter to a friend or a relative about the African-American history they have learned. Students might ask for a letter back. Then have your students bring in the stamps from the letters they receive to share with the class. To extend the lesson, ask your students: Who should be the next African American honored in the Black Heritage series? Have them research people, design stamps, vote for their favorites. Then send the top three names and accompanying artwork with a cover letter to:

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Room 4474E
Washington, DC 20260-2437

(Please note that any original artwork will not be used and cannot be returned.) All letters will be read, and your students' stamp subjects will be considered.

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STAMPERS!

Lesson Two

WORKSHEET

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Messages of Freedom Presentation

Ideas for Your Presentation

- Your presentation should answer the following questions:
  a) Who was your historical figure?
  b) What did your historical figure do?
  c) What obstacles did your historical figure overcome?
  d) What was life like for African Americans where your historical figure lived?
- A presentation can be more than standing up and speaking to the class. A presentation can also include visual aids. These might be a presentation that you create on the computer. Or they might be actual objects that you show as you speak.
- A presentation can include recordings, live music, singing, charts and diagrams, photographs, a dance performance, a painting or mural, or even costumes.
- A team presentation can combine one or two narrators who read while others perform.
- Your entire presentation might be a play that your team writes and performs.
- Whatever kind of presentation you create, be sure that your team teaches your class about your historical figure, the time period in which he or she lived, and African-American history.

Teamwork Rules:

- Respect each team member.
- Take turns speaking. Don't interrupt.
- Everyone must participate. Don't let one person take over.
- Share your interests with the group. Try to assign work according to each team member's strengths and interests.
- Every idea is valuable. No idea is ever stupid.
- Try to agree on things, but if you can't agree, vote.

Ideas for Research

- Divide up your research as much as possible. Each team member should try to find information from a different source.
- Search the library's catalog under the name of your historical figure.
- Search the library's catalog for books under the subject of "Black History" or "African-American History." Look for your historical figure in each book's index.
- Search the library's catalog for more information about your historical figure's time period. For example, Bessie Coleman lived and worked in the early 1900s. What was America like at that time?
- Search the library for information about your historical figure's work or adventures. For example, Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable was a fur trapper in the late 1700s. How did the fur-trapping trade work?
- Search any print or electronic encyclopedias for any of the information above.
- Search the Internet for any of the information above.
- If your historical figure was a musician, writer, or artist, try to find some of his or her work in books or recordings.
- Don't forget to use your librarian, your friends, and your relatives as resources. Ask them where you might find more information on your subject.

After hearing all of the presentations, write a letter to a relative or friend about what you have learned about African-American history. Ask to get a letter back, stamped with a commemorative stamp! Then bring your stamp to school to show the class.

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STAMPERS

Lesson Three

COVER STORIES

Goal:
To introduce stamp collecting skills in the context of American diversity.

Class Time:
One class period. Must be completed within 30 days after Patricia Roberts Harris stamp is issued.

Prep Time:
1/2 hour

Curriculum Connection:
Language Arts, Social Studies, Civics

Materials:
Envelopes, Patricia Roberts Harris stamps, writing materials

Using a First Day Cover and creative writing, this lesson helps students broaden the notion of diversity and helps them discover new ways to fight prejudice.

To Begin:

The Patricia Roberts Harris stamp is the latest addition to the USPS Black Heritage series. Check online at <http://stampsonline.com> or with your local Postmaster for its date of issue. Every commemorative stamp is issued in one special city (city of issue) on one special day (date of issue). A special First Day of Issue cancellation is available only from the city of issue for up to 30 days after the stamp is issued. You can buy the stamp at your own local Post Office or online.

- Distribute the Lesson Three worksheet and review A Cool Collection with your students.
- Show your students the Patricia Roberts Harris stamp and discuss Harris with them.
- Your students are going to put a special letter inside their First Day Cover. (To create a crisp cancellation impression, student letters should be on the same kind of paper and folded identically.)
- Ask students to read *The School Without Prejudice* on Worksheet Three.
- Brainstorm with your students. What could they write for *The School Without Prejudice* assignment? When their ideas start percolating, ask them to write.
- Ask your students to share their writing with the class before they put their letters into their envelopes.
- To prepare their First Day Covers, students may decorate their envelopes or leave them plain. They may address the envelope to themselves or write their names in pencil under the flaps. Have them affix the Patricia Roberts Harris stamps to their envelopes. They should neatly fold their letters in an identical manner, place them in the envelopes, and tuck in the flaps.
- Collect all of the envelopes and put them in one larger envelope. You must also include another large stamped envelope addressed to yourself. Your students' First Day Covers will be mailed back to you in the second large envelope. Mail your envelope to: Patricia Roberts Harris First Day of Issue, Postmaster, [City of Issue], [State] [ZIP Code]. Remember: You MUST include a large, self-addressed, stamped envelope. Students may also send for their First Day Covers individually. Please see the instructions for "A Cool Collection" in the Lesson Three worksheet.
- To conclude, discuss with your class everything you have learned this month about diversity. Encourage them to keep writing letters to themselves and expanding their First Day Cover collections.

Patricia Roberts Harris (1924–1985)

Patricia Roberts Harris's career is a series of firsts. A brilliant woman and great student, Harris attended Howard University and George Washington University School of Law. She graduated first in her law school class—while holding down a full-time job! When President Lyndon Johnson named her ambassador to Luxembourg in 1965, Harris became the first African-American woman to serve as an ambassador to a European country. Even more impressive, Harris became the first African-American woman ever to serve on a presidential cabinet. In 1976, President Jimmy Carter appointed Harris to be U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). You can learn more about Patricia Roberts Harris at <http://www.prh2000.org/biography1.htm>.

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STAMPERS

Lesson Three

WORKSHEET

Reproduce for student use.

A Cool Collection

How to create your own First Day Cover stamp collection at home.

You can create a whole stamp collection of First Day Covers. Inside each First Day Cover include a special letter to yourself. Write yourself a letter, poem, or story about the new stamp's topic. Then, not only will you have a great stamp collection, but you will also have a collection of your own thinking and writing.

You can send away for a First Day Cover up to 30 days after the stamp's date of issue. Collectors can order up to 50 First Day Covers at a time. Find new stamps online at <http://www.stampsonline.com>. Click "Collector's Corner" and then click "Schedule of Events." (Or you can ask at your local Post Office.) Here's how to get your own First Day Cover:

1. After the First Day of Issue, buy the stamp from your local Post Office.
2. Affix the stamp to an envelope. This will become your First Day Cover. You can decorate your First Day Cover or leave it plain.
3. Put your letter to yourself inside the First Day Cover. Don't seal it—tuck the flap inside.
4. There are two ways to get your First Day of Issue cancel:
   - **Option #1:** Address your First Day Cover to yourself, so it will be delivered back to you by your letter carrier. (If you choose this option and the value of your stamp is less than current first-class postage, you may have to add some extra stamps.) Your First Day Cover will be protected in a clear plastic wrapper when it is delivered to you.
   - **Option #2:** Leave your First Day Cover unaddressed. Place it in a second stamped envelope you have addressed to yourself. The second envelope must be big enough to hold your First Day Cover without folding.
5. Mail your First Day Cover (or your self-addressed stamped envelope if you chose Option #2) in a larger stamped envelope addressed to: [Stamp Name] First Day of Issue, Postmaster, [City of Issue], [State] [ZIP Code]. You can get this information from your local Postmaster or on the USPS website at <http://www.stampsonline.com>.

Be sure to mail your envelope to the city of issue within 30 days of the stamp's First Day of Issue.

The School Without Prejudice

Write yourself a letter in which you tell a story about a school full of students and teachers who have no prejudice. In this school, there would be no name-calling, teasing, or excluding someone who is different. Instead, there would be respect for each individual. Kids would be open to making new friends. No one would be alone because he or she was bad at sports, was new to the school, wore the wrong clothes, was too small or too big, or was of a different race or religion.

Here's how to write your letter to yourself:

1. **IMAGINE:** It is your first day at a new school. You have just moved to town and you have no friends. You get out of your parent's old, rusty car in front of school. A crowd of kids is waiting to go in. Many of them are wearing expensive sneakers. You are wearing very uncool sandals with socks. Most of the kids are the same race, which is different from yours. You are scared! Luckily for you, you are about to experience *The School Without Prejudice*.
2. **WRITE:** Write a non-rhyming poem, story, or a letter to yourself about your first day at *The School Without Prejudice*. What do the other kids look like and wear? What are you thinking and feeling? How do kids without prejudice treat you? What's your first class like? How does the teacher without prejudice help you learn what is difficult for you? What is it like when you enter the strange new cafeteria for lunch?
3. **CONCLUDE:** Write about diversity, prejudice, and acceptance. How should people eliminate prejudice at their schools?

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CELEBRATE DIVERSITY DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH!

CELEBRATE
DIVERSITY

STAMPERS®

U.S. STAMPS PORTRAY THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR PAST AND THE DREAMS OF OUR FUTURE. LIKE ALL ART FORMS, THEY EXPLORE OUR DIVERSE CULTURE. JOURNEY THROUGH BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH STAMPS THAT CELEBRATE IMPORTANT AFRICAN AMERICANS.

Benjamin Banneker
(1731–1806)
Mathematician, Astronomer
Benjamin Banneker accomplished amazing things by teaching himself math and science from borrowed books. He took a pocket watch apart and put it back together. He also carved a tall striking clock with a pocketknife. In 1791, Banneker was chosen to work on the Washington, D.C., land survey.
Stamp issued 2/15/80

Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable
(1745–1818)
Pioneer, Businessman,
Founder of Chicago
Friend to Native American nations, peacemaker, and fur trader, Jean Baptiste Pointe Du Sable built a home in Eschikagou in the 1770s. His home became a successful trading post. It was the first permanent settlement in a wilderness that later came to be known as Chicago.
Stamp issued 2/20/87

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Salem Poor

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Did you know that African Americans fought alongside Minutemen and soldiers in the Revolutionary War? Salem Poor was one such soldier. He fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Fourteen American soldiers honored this "brave and gallant soldier" as a hero.
Stamp issued 3/25/75

Sojourner Truth
(1797–1883)
Abolitionist,
Suffragist, Orator

If you were to change your name, what would you call yourself? Born into slavery, Sojourner Truth began life as Isabella Bomefree. After she gained her freedom, Isabella renamed herself Sojourner Truth. She felt God had called her to sojourn (travel) the countryside and speak out against slavery.
Stamp issued 2/4/86

Jim Beckwourth
(1798–1866)
Scout, Explorer,
Mountain Man

Jim Beckwourth lived an adventurous life as a scout and a famous mountain man. The Crow Indians adopted him, and he lived with them for 13 years. Beckwourth went on to discover an important pass to California in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, called Beckwourth Pass.
Stamp issued 10/18/94

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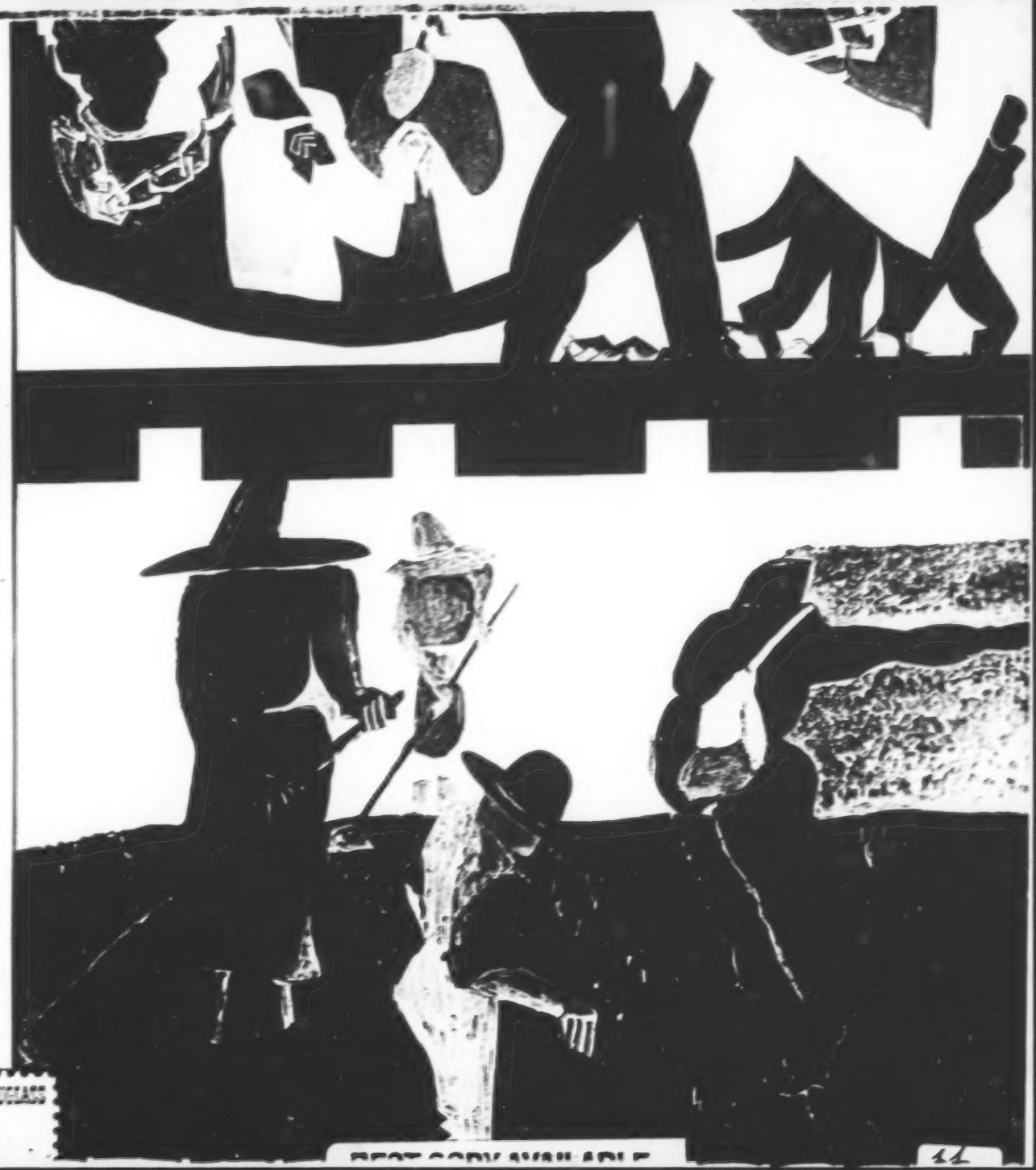
Frederick Douglass
(1817–1895)
Abolitionist, Journalist

Born a slave, Frederick Douglass was one of



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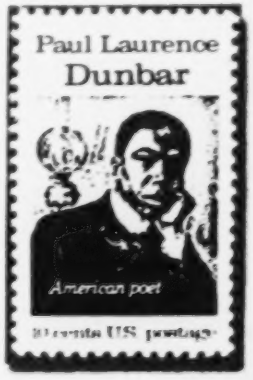
out against slavery. Douglass continued to fight for civil rights even after the Civil War.
Stamp issued 2/14/67

Henry O. Tanner
(1859-1937)
Artist
At 13, Henry Tanner already knew he would be an artist. He began to study painting when he was 20. Faced with racial prejudice in America, Tanner moved to Paris, France, in 1891. His work won many prizes, including the French Legion of Honor.
Stamp issued 6/29/95

Paul Laurence Dunbar
(1872-1906)
Poet, Novelist
Words came easily to Paul Dunbar, even in high school. The only African American in his class, he was voted president of the literary society and made editor of the school paper. Dunbar was one of the first famous African-American poets in the United States.
Stamp issued 5/1/75



Madam C.J. Walker
(1867-1919)
Businesswoman, Inventor
"Don't sit down and wait for the opportunities to come...get up and make them!" said Madam C.J. Walker. Walker created her own fortune by inventing beauty products for African-American women. She was one of America's first female self-made millionaires!
Stamp issued 1/28/98

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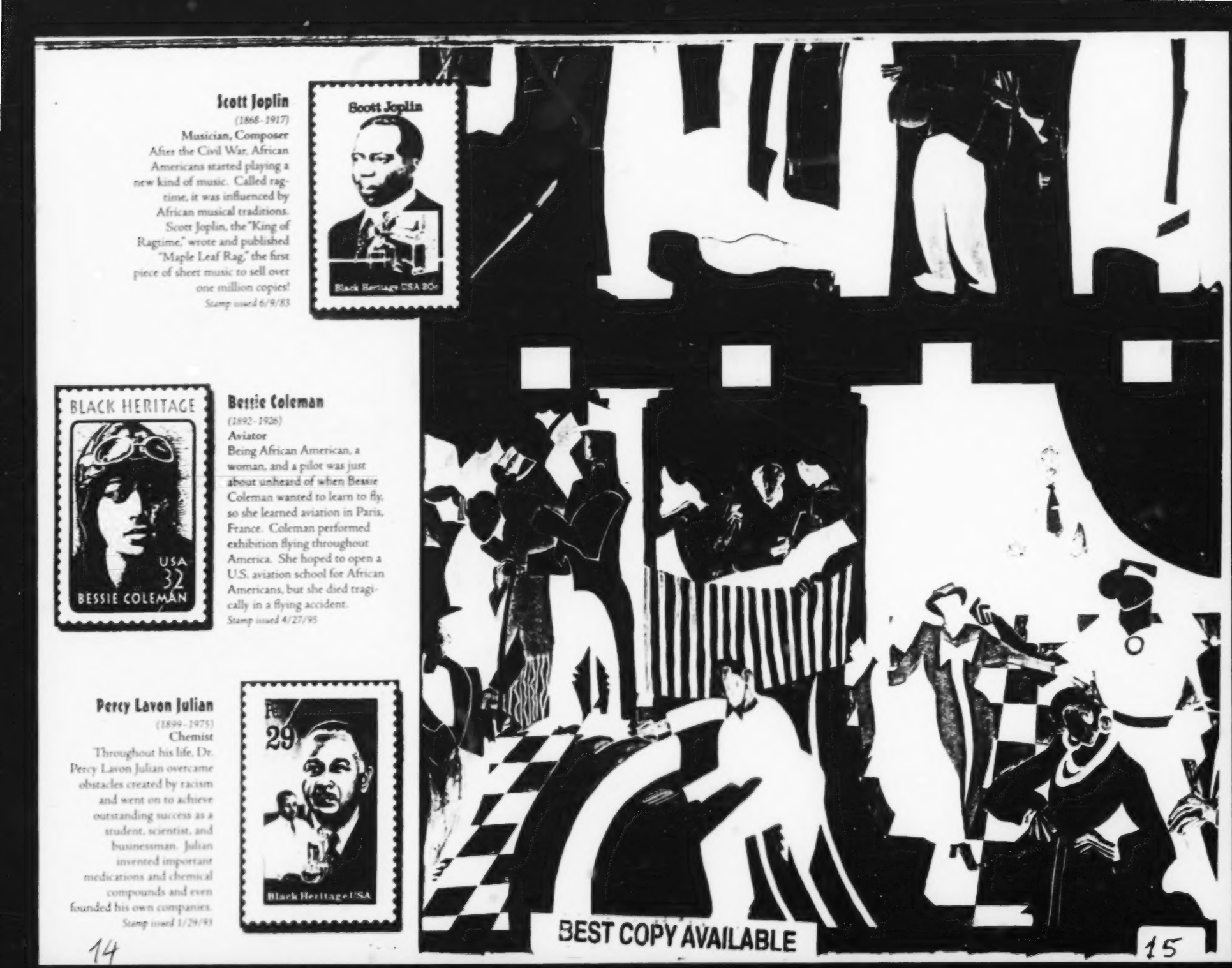
Scott Joplin
(1868–1917)
Musician, Composer
After the Civil War, African Americans started playing a new kind of music. Called ragtime, it was influenced by African musical traditions. Scott Joplin, the "King of Ragtime," wrote and published "Maple Leaf Rag," the first piece of sheet music to sell over one million copies!
Stamp issued 6/9/83
Scott Joplin
Black Heritage USA 20¢
BLACK HERITAGE
USA
32
BESSIE COLEMAN
Bessie Coleman
(1892–1926)
Aviator
Being African American, a woman, and a pilot was just about unheard of when Bessie Coleman wanted to learn to fly, so she learned aviation in Paris, France. Coleman performed exhibition flying throughout America. She hoped to open a U.S. aviation school for African Americans, but she died tragically in a flying accident.
Stamp issued 4/27/95
Percy Lavon Julian
(1899–1975)
Chemist
Throughout his life, Dr. Percy Lavon Julian overcame obstacles created by racism and went on to achieve outstanding success as a student, scientist, and businessman. Julian invented important medications and chemical compounds and even founded his own companies.
Stamp issued 1/29/93
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Black Heritage USA
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(1911–1972)
Gospel Singer
Mahalia Jackson began singing in her church choir when she was a child. During the 1940s and 1950s, Jackson's gospel recordings were so popular that people all over the world came to know and love gospel music. Many of Jackson's recordings sold millions of copies.

Stamp issued 7/15/98

Jesse Owens
(1913–1980)
Track and Field Star, Olympic Gold Medalist
James Cleveland "Jesse" Owens ran incredibly fast, even as a boy. At the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany, Owens won four gold medals. It was a great victory for African Americans against Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, who claimed that Aryans (Whites) were superior to other races.

Stamp issued 9/10/98

Jesse Owens™ Estate of Jesse Owens c/o CMG Worldwide, Inc., IN.

Thelonious Monk
(1917–1982)
Musician, Composer
Thelonious Monk's talent for creating new harmonies on the piano caused some people to think he was just making mistakes! He was a well-respected jazz musician who played bebop in the 1940s. Monk's unusual music did not become widely appreciated until the late 1950s and 1960s.

Stamp issued 9/16/95

Jackie Robinson
(1919–1972)
Baseball Player, Civil

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Rights Activist, Businessman
When Jackie Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers™ in 1947, he became the first African American to play Major League Baseball since the 1890s. Besides being a great baseball player, he stood up to prejudice, worked hard for integration, and was a successful businessman.
Stamp issued 2/15/99

Jackie Robinson™ Estate of Jackie Robinson c/o CMG Worldwide, Indpls., IN.

Martin Luther King, Jr.
(1929–1968)
Minister, Civil Rights Leader
Martin Luther King's faith in peace fueled his fight for civil rights. The most popular and powerful civil rights leader of his time, King led Whites and Blacks in nonviolent civil disobedience. He helped to break racial barriers across America. King's message of peace and justice was often shattered by violence. He was murdered in Memphis, Tennessee in 1968.
Stamp issued 9/17/99

Patricia Roberts Harris
(1924–1985)
Lawyer, Teacher, Cabinet Member
Patricia Roberts Harris was the first woman law school dean. Her appointments—in 1965 by President Johnson as ambassador to Luxembourg and in 1976 by President Carter as U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development—made her the first African-American woman to serve in these positions.
Stamp issued January 2000

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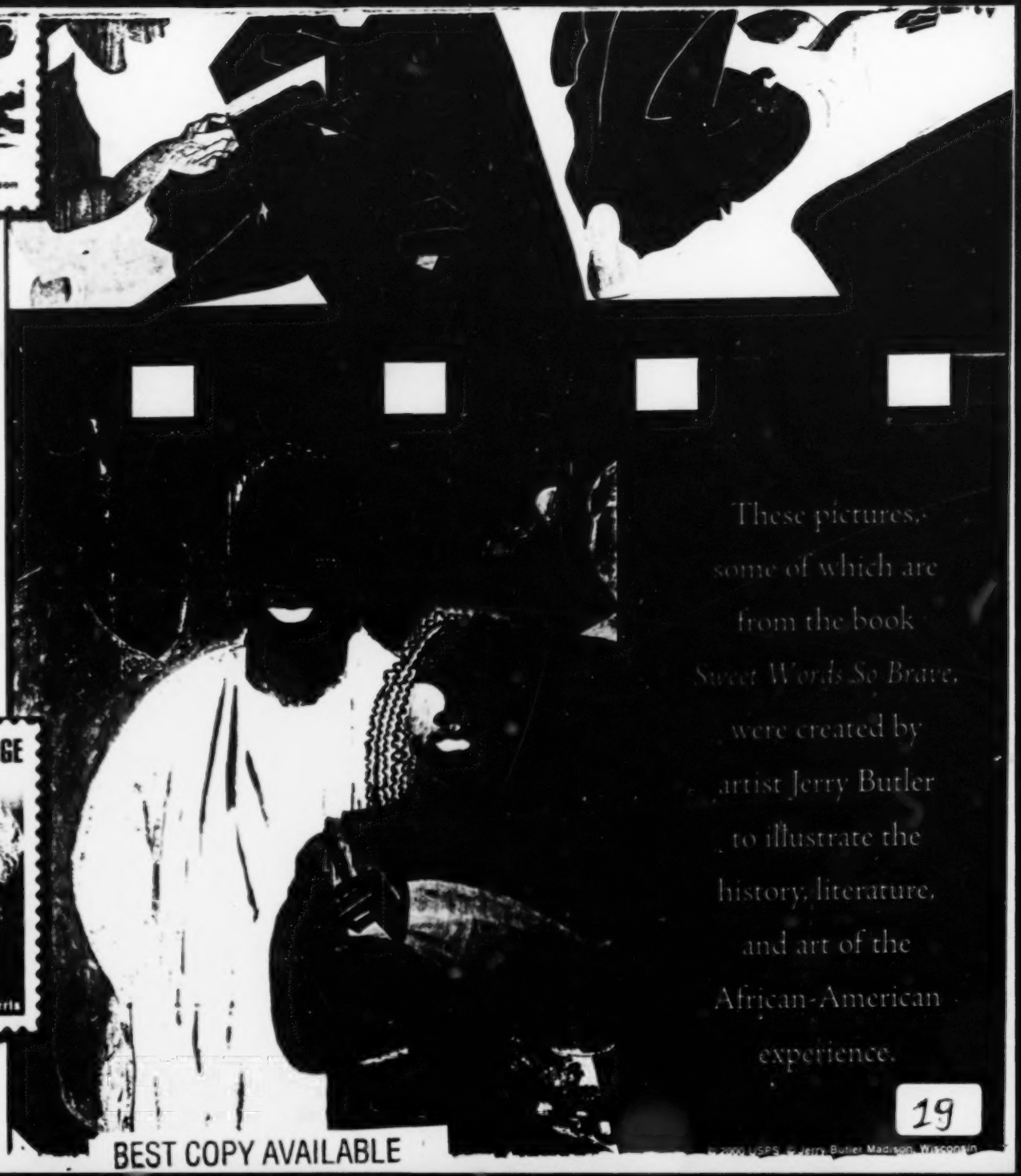

These pictures, some of which are from the book *Sweet Words So Brave*, were created by artist Jerry Butler to illustrate the history, literature, and art of the African-American experience.

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